

Plastic-free Fun Fair celebrates World Environment Day and World Oceans Day 2019

The following is issued on behalf of the Environmental Campaign Committee:

To celebrate World Environment Day and World Oceans Day, the Environmental Campaign Committee (ECC) held the Plastic-free Fun Fair today (June 9) under the theme "Go Plastic-free" at Tai Kwun in Central. The second phase of the "Plastic-free Takeaway, Use Reusable Tableware" promotion campaign, jointly organised by the ECC and the Environmental Protection Department (EPD), was also launched at the event to encourage members of the public not to obtain disposable tableware when they order takeaways and to cultivate plastic-and-disposable-free habits.

At the opening ceremony, the Chairman of the ECC, Professor Joseph Sung, said that the enormous amount of plastic waste generated by human beings had not only increased the burden on landfills, but also caused adverse impacts on the earth's ecosystems. If we do not take action now, the pollution brought by plastic waste may threaten our own health in the long run, he said.

Speaking at the ceremony, the Secretary for the Environment, Mr Wong Kam-sing, said that the Government had taken the lead in introducing various policies and measures to tackle the problem of plastic waste. However, public participation and co-operation were indispensable. He said he hoped that the public could reduce waste at source by using less disposable plastic products in their daily life and shoulder their responsibility in protecting the environment.

Other officiating guests included the Permanent Secretary for the Environment/ Director of Environmental Protection, Ms Maisie Cheng; the Acting Director of Agriculture, Fisheries and Conservation, Dr So Ping-man; and the Acting Director of the Hong Kong Observatory, Dr Cheng Cho-ming. With the "four plastic-free must-haves", namely reusable cutlery, a food container, a water bottle and an eco-bag in hand, the officiating guests invited the audience to show their commitment to "Go Plastic-free" together and enjoy the Plastic-free Fun Fair.

The second phase of the "Plastic-free Takeaway, Use Reusable Tableware" promotion campaign, extended to cover more restaurants, was also launched at the opening ceremony. Starting from tomorrow (June 10), the ECC and the EPD will join hands with some 700 eateries across the territory (including over 630 eateries under more than 30 catering businesses, as well as over 50 canteens and restaurants in government venues) to encourage the public to go plastic-and-disposable-free when ordering takeaways and reduce single-use plastic waste. Under the promotion campaign, members of the public can get a sticker for each takeaway order made at the participating

restaurants/catering businesses without obtaining disposable tableware. After collecting six stickers, they can redeem them for reusable stainless steel cutlery sponsored by the ECC, or receive a complimentary offer/gift from participating restaurants/catering businesses. To tie in with its various Go Plastic-free programmes, the EPD is also holding the "Plastic-free Beach, Tableware First" 2019 campaign during the swimming season to mobilise support from eateries on public beaches or in their vicinity to avoid using or handing out disposable plastic tableware as far as possible so as to prevent plastic waste from entering and polluting the marine environment.

The Plastic-free Fun Fair involved nearly 30 government departments, non-government organisations, green groups, tertiary institutes and community groups to jointly promote the plastic-free message to members of the public through various activities, including interactive educational booths, sharing sessions, upcycling workshops and music performances. Other activities included a story-telling corner and a pop-up library set up by the Leisure and Cultural Services Department to encourage the public to learn more about environmental protection. An artwork made from marine litter collected during shoreline clean-up activities was also displayed to further arouse public attention on plastic waste in the marine environment.

To engage the public in solving the issue of marine refuse, the EPD has co-ordinated and organised more than 110 local shoreline cleaning activities in May and June 2019. The EPD has also collaborated with Guangdong Province in carrying out clean-shoreline activities for the first time. In addition, "Clean Shorelines Heroes" were commended at today's opening ceremony for their selfless contributions in protecting the marine environment. Meanwhile, the ECC has organised several local tours in coastal areas to give an opportunity for participants to appreciate the beauty of Hong Kong's shorelines and appeal for their support in protecting the marine ecosystem and the natural environment.

In addition, all the Community Green Stations (CGS) in operation, namely, the Eastern CGS, Kwai Tsing CGS, Kwun Tong CGS, Sha Tin CGS, Sham Shui Po CGS, Tuen Mun CGS and Yuen Long CGS, have also run activities under the "Go Plastic-free" theme for residents of the respective districts.

The ECC, the MTR Corporation and the Education Bureau jointly organise the ECC MTR Environmental Award for Schools every year to nurture a sense of environmental protection and responsibility among students. This year, an "All Go Plastic-free" Poster Design Competition was organised to encourage primary and secondary students to unleash their creativity to promote the plastic-free message. Awards were presented by the ECC at the ceremony today to winners of the school competitions and the winning entries were also displayed at the event venue.

Founded in 1990, the ECC aims to enhance public participation in protecting the environment. The ECC holds promotion events for World Environment Day every year and organises programmes including the Hong Kong Awards for Environmental Excellence, the Hong Kong Green School Awards, the Student Environmental Protection Ambassador Scheme, Green Lunar New Year Fairs and Reusable Tableware Lending Programme for Large-scale Events.

Information on the ECC's programmes and activities is available at www.ecc.org.hk.